

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 103787

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MASS, UK, AR

SUBJECT: UK SALE OF DESTROYERS TO ARGENTINA

1. DURING CALL ON EUR/NE DIRECTOR ROBERT FUNSETH
APRIL 20, BRITISH EMBASSY HEAD OF CHANCERY MARK
RUSSELL LEFT AIDE MEMOIRE ON US LICENSING FOR EXPORT
OF TWO SPERRY MK 19 STABILIZED COMPASSES FOR TWO TYPE
42 DESTROYERS SOLD BY UK TO ARGENTINA (TEXT PARA TWO).
RUSSELL ADDED ORALLY THAT EMBASSY UNDERSTOOD A NUMBER
OF SIMILAR LICENSE APPLICATIONS FOR ARGENTINA WERE
BEING HELD UP ON HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS, AND REITERATED
HMG CONCERN AT THE PROSPECT OF THEIR NOT BEING APPROVED
PRIOR TO EFFECTIVE DATE (9/30/78) OF CUTOFF FOR
LICENSES TO ARGENTINA AS MANDATED BY PL 95-92. FUNSETH
AGREED TO LOOK INTO QUESTION.

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2. BEGIN TEXT.

- THE UK HAVE SOLD TWO TYPE 42 DESTROYERS TO ARGENTINA,
EACH OF WHICH HAVE TWO SPERRY MK 19 STABILISED COMPASSES
FITTED, IN COMMON WITH ROYAL NAVY SHIPS. THE COMPASSES
ARE US ORIGIN AND MANUFACTURED OUT OF SPERRY,
CHARLOTTESVILLE.

THE SPARES SUPPORT FOR THESE TWO SHIPS IS MANAGED BY THE SHIPBUILDERS - VICKERS OF BARROW. ORDERS FOR TWO SETS OF COMPASS SPARES WERE SUB-CONTRACTED BY VICKERS TO SPERRY GYROSCOPE UK, WHO IN TURN PUT THE WORK OUT TO THEIR SISTER DIVISION AT CHARLOTTESVILLE. THE ORDERS WERE PLACED ON 13 DECEMBER 1976 (VALUE DOLLARS 100K) AND 10 MARCH 1977 (DOLLARS 13K).

AN EXPORT LICENCE WAS APPLIED FOR IN RESPECT OF THE FIRST ORDER ON 4 NOVEMBER 1977, STATE DEPARTMENT NO REFERENCE 047998. THE OFFICE OF MUNITIONS CONTROL ADVISED AGAINST SUBMITTING A LICENCE FOR THE SECOND ORDER UNTIL THE OUTCOME OF THE FIRST WAS KNOWN. BUT THE COMPANY WILL NOW BE SUBMITTING AN APPLICATION FOR A SECOND LICENCE VERY SHORTLY. (UNLESS THEY DO THIS IT WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED')

THE LICENCE HAS NOT YET BEEN APPROVED BECAUSE, WE UNDERSTAND, OF THE DIFFERENT SITUATION INTRODUCED BY SEC 11 OF THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE ACT OF 1977 (PUBLIC LAW 95-92), A COPY OF WHICH IS ATTACHED. THE PROVISIONS OF THIS SECTION DO NOT COME INTO EFFECT, HOWEVER, UNTIL 30 SEPTEMBER 1978. IF THE LICENCE IS NOT AGREED PRIOR TO THAT DATE WE ASSUME IT WILL BE REJECTED.
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THIS WOULD BE UNREASONABLE IN RESPECT OF ORDERS PLACED IN 1976 AND WOULD CAUSE CONSIDERABLE EMBARRASSMENT TO BOTH THE UK SHIPBUILDER AND THE UK GOVERNMENT, WHO ARE CLOSELY INVOLVED IN THE SHIP CONTRACT AND FUTURE SUPPORT COMMITMENTS ENTERED INTO WITH THE ARGENTINE NAVY. THE VALUE OF THE ORDERS ARE SMALL AND THEY ARE FOR SPARES OF A NON-CONTENTIOUS COMPONENT.

19 APRIL 1978. END TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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